



The Friends of The Frelinghuysen Arboretum

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The past year marked the end of an era with the retirement in January of Lesley Parness, Superintendent of Horticultural Education. Lesley served with distinction for 15 years, and her many accomplishments brought widespread recognition to the Arboretum for outstanding educational programs. Under her leadership, six years of themed programs focused on the cultures of Mexico, Italy, England, China, Japan, and Scotland. She coordinated the construction of two teaching kitchens/classrooms, the lobby, and Matilda's Café. She partnered with the Morris County Agricultural Extension Office to bring the Master Gardener program to the Arboretum. She founded the Garden State Gardens Consortium, of which the Frelinghuysen Arboretum is a member. She developed the Morris County Community Garden Open Gates program. She cared for and interpreted the Elizabeth Donnell Kay Rare Book Collection through numerous themed talks. The Friends are grateful for her guidance and enthusiasm, her scholarship and professionalism, and all the wonderful cooperative programs through the years. Her retirement was celebrated at the Friends' New Year's party in January, with a surprise visit by Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, who paid tribute to Lesley's contributions and to the Friends' support of the Arboretum.

The Morris County Park Commission (MCPC) made several new staff appointments, creating a new position in September for Jenny Gaus-Myers as Assistant Director of Education and Interpretive Services. Mark Inzano joined as the new Manager of Horticulture at the Arboretum, and Ann Fahey was hired as Assistant Superintendent of Horticultural Education in April. New people bring new ideas, and many positive developments are anticipated.

Further changes are in the planning stages, as MCPC Executive Director explained to Friends' officers in a January meeting. An upgrade to the MCPC computer system will allow for online program registration on the MCPC website. This will have a significant impact on the organization of the Friends' website, staff job responsibilities and Friends' operations and finances. The Board devoted countless hours to studying and discussing the proposed changes, also working with a non-profit advisor in a day-long retreat in March. Discussions are still

ongoing, but the Board hopes to reach an agreement with the MCPC early in the 2017-2018 year regarding a revision of the MCPC-Friends cooperative working relationship.

Meanwhile, programs continued without losing a beat, thanks to the forward planning of Lesley Parness and staff member Cynthia Triolo, who has been promoted to Senior Horticultural Program Specialist. Many outstanding speakers appeared during the year, including Susan Cohan, Peter Hatch, Marta McDowell, Vincent Simeone, Fred Spicer, Bill Thomas, and Denise Wiles Adams. Two new series were initiated by Cynthia Triolo: “What’s So Great About...” which focuses on specific aspects of the gardens, and “Grow Your Groceries,” which talks about growing and cooking with homegrown vegetables, in partnership with Jeanne Lardino. There was also an increase in the number of offerings for children.

The popular Community Garden Conference in March was sold out yet again, with the expanding interest in locally grown foods. July 2016 saw the first Open Gates event, which featured nine community gardens throughout Morris County. This important outreach effort attracted 200 culturally diverse visitors. The event was supported by the Friends, and by a donation from Whole Foods from a fundraiser the previous April.

The Friends also supported the production of a new video about the Arboretum, which debuted in November. A short version appears on the website, and a 20-minute version is available for programs and tour groups.

The two major fundraising events for the Friends—Gingerbread Wonderland and the Plant Sale—went off smoothly, thanks to hundreds of hours of planning and work by our many valued volunteers, MCPC staff, Friends’ staff and Board members. The ever-popular Gingerbread Wonderland event reached a milestone in its 25th year, and was attended by nearly 12,000 visitors. The Plant Sale, in its 22nd year, featured a preview party with a talk by noted plantsman David Culp. Despite the cold and threatening weather, our loyal shoppers were enthusiastic about the unusual and high-quality plant offerings. More details about the Plant Sale appear below. In addition, the Friends received a most generous bequest from the estate of former Board member Valarie Gilliland, who organized and managed the Cottage Gift Shop for many years.

From the proceeds of these and other sources, the Friends were able to support the development of the Arboretum and its educational programs through several grants to the MCPC totaling \$10,319: A grant supporting the 2016 summer interns, at \$4,198; \$1,121 for the 2016 Open Gates event; \$1,000 for a staff seminar on Public Horticulture by Kirk Brown in December; and plants donated after the 2017 sale valued at \$4,000. In addition, revenues from programs and the Gingerbread event were shared with the MCPC.

None of the activities described above and below would be possible without the efforts of the Friends staff—Karen Muccillo, Margery Ennist, and Cynthia O’Hagan, who replaced Ellen Fishter in October. They manage our office operations efficiently and cheerfully despite the many challenges thrown their way. Similarly, the MCPC education staff—Jenny Gaus and Ann Fahey, Cynthia Triolo, Gwen Montgomery, Beth Feldman, and other part-time personnel

coordinate closely with the Friends on all our activities, and we sincerely appreciate their tireless support.

Last but certainly not least, are the many people who volunteer their time on behalf of the Friends' mission—from those whose names appear on the list at the end of the report, to the dedicated Board members who contribute literally thousands of hours of their time and talents. During the past year, resignations were regretfully accepted from Cheryl Byrnes (Plant Sale), Betsy Martone (Vice President and Scholarship), and Beth Riley (Retail Partners). New members were welcomed: Heather Emelander (Scholarship), and Alex Liu (Treasurer). Kathy Kane stepped down as Treasurer, but remains on the Finance Committee. She made invaluable contributions to Board policies and operations, brought on a part-time bookkeeper, and oversaw the search for a new Treasurer.

Finally, we give thanks to you, our members, whose loyalty and ongoing support make it possible to further our mission at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. If you have time, skills, and a love for the Arboretum, please consider how you might contribute. We welcome your inquiries.

Judy Snow
President

AWARDS

Chair: Sally Hensen

The Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum annually presents the Arbor Day Award to members of the Friends who have given valued service to the organization. In April 2017 one individual and one couple were so honored.

Susan and Stephen George were members of the Friends' Executive Board for many years. They served most notably as Bus Trip Co-Chairs, but also offered their services at the Gingerbread Wonderland, the Plant Sale, the Blackburn Tea, and as members of the Finance Committee. Their experience as owners of a local nursery were invaluable in advising the Executive Committee in many areas.

Lesley Parness was Superintendent of Horticultural Education for the Morris County Park Commission for fifteen years. She excelled in choosing and planning outstanding programs and events for the Friends. Many new innovations were ushered in under her supervision, including cell phone tours, the Great Speakers series, and the Community Gardens Conference. Her special dedication to the Rare Book Collection brought needed focus to that valuable resource.

At the June 2017 Annual Meeting Tom Castronovo received the Friends' Annual Award, given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the world of horticulture. Tom is founder and editor of the *Gardener News*, a monthly newspaper widely distributed to all those in the state with an interest in horticulture and the environment. He has worked with local elected officials to pass legislation supporting safe practices in the industry, and is a speaker and

presenter on many garden related topics. It is an honor to bestow the Annual Award on such a worthy recipient.

BLACKBURN SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Heather Emelander

In December of 2016 new FOFA Board member Heather Emelander was appointed Chair of the Scholarship Committee, a position vacated by Betsy Martone who moved out of area.

Ms. Martone met with Chair Emelander, FOFA President Judy Snow and North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) representative Sid Jones in January 2017 to discuss and develop the calendar for 2017's scholarship round. The Watnong Chapter of NARGS generously offered to donate \$500 toward the 2017 scholarship.

The Benjamin C. Blackburn Scholarship lecture was held on February 4, 2017. It was a well-attended talk by Chanticleer Executive Director R. William Thomas. Proceeds from the lecture coupled with the donation from NARGS/Watnong allowed the Friends to award \$2,000 to a deserving student enrolled in the Landscape and Horticulture Program at County College of Morris (CCM).

The Benjamin C. Blackburn Scholarship was awarded this year to Hunter Hildebrant, a resident of Hackettstown, NJ. Hunter helps her family operate their farm business that dates back several generations. The Hildebrant's produce and plants are sold through community sponsored agriculture shares and farm markets in New York and Northern New Jersey. The Friends are pleased to contribute to Hunter's education at CCM.

GARDEN TRAVEL COMMITTEE

Chair: Diana Propper

The scheduled date of March 14th for our annual trip to the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show saw the biggest snow storm of the season. Fortunately, all was not lost. We were able to reschedule our trip for later in the week and had a very pleasant bus ride into Philadelphia. This year's theme was Holland and provided color and flora in abundance. Bicycles of all colors had baskets brimming with floral arrangements. There were bridges with floral laden window boxes, windmills, wooden shoes and needless to say, flowering bulbs galore! Many remarked that it was one of the best shows in years and a welcome respite from the snow storm earlier in the week. A good time was had by all!

We have been very busy throughout this year planning for our highly anticipated 10 day trip in June to Southwest England where we will be touring an amazing array of gardens in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Surrey. Our itinerary is finalized, the trip is full and we are ready to go!

Inspired by a previous talk at the Arboretum given by Richard Hartlage regarding his garden design of the Chihuly Garden and Glass project in Seattle Washington, we have just planned a

trip to the New York Botanical Garden for September 28, 2017 to tour the fantastic glass works of world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly on Exhibit throughout the gardens and Conservatory there.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

Chair: Sonnie Reutelhuber

Board members prepared refreshments for several of the Members' events, including the Annual Meeting in June 2016 and the New Year's Party in January 2017. The January event was supplemented by a beautiful cake in honor of Lesley Parness' retirement. Lovely floral arrangements and table decorations were provided by Linda Pastorino. A catered luncheon was offered to friends and family of the honorees at the April Arbor Day event, coordinated by Sally Hensen. Friends' and MCPC staff help with set-up and clean-up, which we greatly appreciate.

LIBRARY AND RARE BOOK COMMITTEE

Chair: Judy Snow

In September, the Friends funded the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts from Philadelphia to make recommendations for a metal vault to house and protect the Elizabeth Donnell Kay Rare Book Collection. They provided a report to the MCPC concerning size and a suitable location. Further steps were put on hold pending renovations to the Mansion, where MCPC Executive Director Dave Helmer would like to site the collection.

In November, Lesley Parness presented a talk on "Native Sons and Daughters: Exploring American Authors in the Elizabeth Donnell Kay Rare Book Collection." This was another in her on-going series that highlighted outstanding and beautifully illustrated books in the collection.

Judy Snow arranged for the donation to the Arboretum of approximately 16 boxes of used garden books remaining from the Visiting Nurse Association of Somerset Hills rummage sales in October and May. The sale of the books on the lobby cart contributes to the conservation of the rare books. Each year, the funds go toward custom protective conservation boxes for the most fragile books.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Linda Pastorino

Membership for the year ranged from a low of 933 to a high of 987. 210 memberships were terminated, and 183 new memberships were added. A majority of the new members joined in the spring.

New part-time staff member Cynthia O'Hagan came on board in October, replacing Ellen Fishter. She is responsible for managing membership records, renewals, and notifications, and

has made several valuable suggestions for cost-savings and better timing of mailings. She suggested a survey of lapsed members which resulted in 20 members rejoining.

The committee made many suggestions to the Board through the year for recruiting new members, including having tables at key events to promote membership, and evaluating demographic data. A direct mail campaign opportunity was evaluated at the January meeting, but subsequently was deemed too costly.

The ability to accept credit card payment for memberships using the iPhone Square app was added for the Plant Sale with the assistance of webmaster Ollie Acheson. A total of 31 new members joined over the Plant Sale weekend via credit card and check.

Changes to the membership brochure and benefits sheet are under discussion. We need to do more to inform people of the benefits of membership, including the retail partners program and reciprocal admissions program.

PLANT SALE

Chair: Ilona Ontscherenki

The Friends' 22nd annual Plant Sale fundraiser was held at the arboretum May 5-7, 2017, resulting in over \$50K of revenue and over \$12K profit. More than 80 volunteers worked on the sale this year, contributing their time and skills in various capacities during the set-up weekend, during the sale weekend, and through the after sale activities. Numerous MCPC employees also provided invaluable support before, during, and after the sale and the enthusiastic energy of everyone guided the team to another successful event despite less-than-ideal stormy conditions throughout the weekend.

A preview talk was held the evening of April 6th and resulted in over a dozen presale orders totaling over \$2K (part of the total). A new, members-only event was introduced on Friday afternoon: "Prosecco, Pelligrino, and Plants" with guest speaker David Culp. This event was attended by just over 40 members and resulted in 10 new memberships. Members-only shopping commenced at 4 p.m. and lasted until 7. A further 21 additional memberships were acquired on Saturday and Sunday through the efforts of a dozen volunteers from the Home Garden Club of Morristown, who also dispensed annual plant dividends to members attending the sale.

Two Master Gardeners, Gail DiDemenico and Diane Lattanzio, presented well-attended informal talks on various plant and gardening topics throughout Saturday and Sunday at special stations outside the tent. Another volunteer, Daryl Savage, presented popular container garden ideas throughout Saturday. All three sold lots of plants!

Customer turnout was somewhat less in than recent past years so the sales team decided to have a one-time-only after sale open both to volunteers and to Friends' members and those receiving our email blasts and following us on Facebook. This three-hour event on May 9th was well attended and helped recover a substantial portion of the costs of the inventory. At the end, the

remaining inventory, valued at approximately \$4K, was donated to the MCPC for use throughout the arboretum, Willowwood, and Bamboo Brook.

RETAIL PARTNERS

Chair: Beth Riley

A summary of the Retail Partners program was provided to the Board at the February meeting. Results from a 2016 member survey indicated that 43% of the respondents shopped at the Retail Partners and 62.5% of them shopped more than four times per year. Research should be done to explore reciprocal relationships beyond the traditional horticulture category with local museums.

During the year, Hall's Garden Center rejoined the Retail Partners Program. Unfortunately, two partners—Parker Gardens in Scotch Plains and Concurso's Garden Center in Montville—went out of business.

Beth Riley resigned from the Board in April after six years of managing the Retail Partners program, and will be greatly missed.

YOUTH EDUCATION

Chair: Larisa Bohensky

Youth Education programs are very popular at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, attracting many young people, visitors and new members of the Friends.

Many of the young visitors come on school field trips during spring and fall. Our volunteers and staff conducted 61 workshops, introducing the children to seed and seedling planting and exposing them to the wonder of plants and the beauty of the Arboretum. In addition, there were 10 classes held for a total of 55 Home Schooled children.

“Branching Out!” is a very popular gardening program for children ages 5-13, where they learn to cultivate the soil, plant seeds, plant vegetables and flowers, tend their plots and harvest their crops. The children also do some cooking and nature related crafts. Last summer, 52 children participated and 10 volunteers helped. This spring, 40 children signed up and 8 volunteers are assisting.

Eight groups of Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts (75 children) came for after school workshops to earn their various badges. In addition, 5 large workshops were conducted for 905 Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey.

In the program “Seedlings” for children ages 3-4, 14 classes were held for 70 children with adults.

There were three special events for young people and their accompanying adults:

- “Fairy Day”, a very popular event, where families build fairy houses and furniture from natural materials (125 people participated).
- “Scary Plants”, 100 people participated.

- “Matilda's Tea”, 80 children and adults attended.

WEBMASTER’S REPORT

Ollie Acheson – Webmaster

The Friends web and computer activities continue to expand.

E-mail Newsletter

Circulation of the weekly email newsletter climbed from 2,296 subscribers (both members and non-members) in May 2015 to 2,656 at the end of May this year, a 15% growth. Clearly the Blast is popular with our subscribers – its focus on both upcoming events and brief topical articles is obviously a “hit” as can be seen in the burst of on-line event signups in the day follow each issue. Subscribe to the E-mail Blast at <http://arboretumfriends.org/BlastSubscribe>.

Social Media

Facebook is another major source of information for our followers. Updates appear coincidentally with each email blast as well as for special items of interest to the public.

The Friends maintain an active presence on facebook, featuring a page found at <https://www.facebook.com/FrelinghuysenArboretum>. The popularity of this page continues to grow rapidly, with facebook “Likes” totaling 2,140, up 23% over the 1,740 likes last year.

Website

The Friends’ website, <http://arboretumfriends.org>, provides the broadest coverage of information about the Friends and activities at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. The events page is a central source of information for our visitors, plus it enables them to reserve and pay for events on line.

WiFi in the Haggerty Center

WiFi in the Haggerty Center (funded by The Friends) continues to be quite popular among our visitors. This is particularly useful since the advent of smartphones and tablets among our members and other visitors.

Credit Card

Credit card usage increased through the year both on the website for membership and event registration, as well as at the plant sale. You can enjoy the convenience of online registration and payment by visiting our website.

**Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Donations June 1, 2016-May 31, 2017**

AT&T*
Bank of America, Inc.*
Bendich, Adrienne
Bernstein, Carol & Sinclair, John
Bozoyan, Nish & Victoria Antoun
Bozoyan, Sylvia
Bozoyan, Takouhi, Alice, & Sylvia
Eisenberg, Robin
Falck, Charles
Gabrielson, George & family
Garden Club of America
Girl Scouts, Parsippany Troop 80207
Gorbunoff, David
Gilliland, Valarie (estate of)
Hightower, Barbara
Iaquez, Sonya & Francesco
Neshanic Garden Club
Price, Brian
Propper, Stephen & Diana
Rosenthal, Richard
Schneider Electric North America Foundation*
Seipel, Clif
Talbot's
Uniacke, Barbara
Village Supermarkets/Shop-Rite
Vojta, Sandra & John
Weinberg, Marilyn & Dennis
Whole Foods

*Matching contributions

2016-17 VOLUNTEERS

Staff: Beth Feldman

Alig, Theresa	Gallagher, Deirdre	McGlone, Virginia	Slegona, Brian
Alocca, Janet	Gatzke, Russell	Meola, Debbie	Smith, Barbara C.
Baird, Christine	Gold, Robert	Merritt, Hugh	Sniffen, Eileen
Baird, Irena	Goodson, Sandra	Millar, Patti	Snow, Judy
Ball, Claire	Gulick, Diana	Miller, Patricia	Solstad, Bob
Baron, Julie	Harrell, Gerry	Mills, Betty	Stahlhut, Patricia
Barron, Ed	Hartmann, Barbara	Mistretta, Ronald	Tadikonda, Vasu
Bateman, Melanie	Hays, Pat	Muenzen, Diane	Tango, Meri
Blair, Elizabeth F.	Hedin, Cindy	Music, Carolyn	Tavernas, Irma
Bohensky, Larisa	Hemsen, Robert	Naugle, Joan	Trawinski, Laura
Bolte, Candice	Hemsen, Sally	Nielsen, Ruth	Trepko, Gregory
Bowman, JoAnn	Highfield, Beverly	Norris, Mary Lynne	Troiani, Nellie
Branigan, Beth	Hoagland, Dona	Nosel, Ilene	Venanzi, Pam
Brennan, Madeline	Hulstrunk, Marge	Olin, Mary	Wang, Anita
Brennan, Mary	Jackson, Marla	Ontscherenki, Ilona	Watson, Patricia H.
Brennan, Peter	Jacobson, Andree	Parness, Steve	Wilcox, Suzanne
Bunch, Winifred	Johnson, Christina	Pastorino, Linda	Zaslow, Lori
Buscher, Ryan	Johnson, Claude	Pavlosky, Wing-Yee	Zenkert, Linda
Carr, Sherrie L.	Johnson, Wayne	Phelan, Stephanie	Zweig, Debbie
Cascione, Michael	Jones, Lisa	Poltorak Keyes, Meg	
Ceruzzi, Marion	Jones, Robin	Post, Sue	
Chopko, Roberta	Kallas, Dave	Propper, Diana	
Cioffi, Cynthia	Kane, Bernadette	Raas, Scott	
Conklin, Barbara	Kane, Kathy	Reed, Barbara	
Crincoli, Jonathan	Kilby, John W.	Reed, Harold	
Cuffie, Cynthia	Kipp, Anne	Rega, Cathy	
Cunillera, Jeanne	Knapik, Lucille	Reutelhuber, Sonny	
Curry, Jim	Koding, Aleksandra	Riker, Bunny	
Curry, Karen	Lamenec, Cheryl	Riley, Beth	
Dempsey, Jack	Langdon, Bonnie	Rishe, Margo	
DeRosa, Mary Ann	Leach, Sydney	Rofael, Melissa	
Diering, Robert	Lee, Candace	Rolston, Pat	
Doherty, Regina	Lee, Charlotte	Rufener, Carol	
Ecker, Buel	Lee, Judy	Saks, Marie	
Emelander, Heather	Lee, Preston	Sambrowski, Joan	
Ericksen, Susan	Levoyer, Mary	Scarano, Donna	
Fanning-Deutsch, Diane	Lewis, Carol	Scibilia, Donna Leigh	
Farrell, Myles	Liegner, Susan	Schmanske, Maria	
Feldman, Rodger	Lynch, Diane	Schramm, Hollye	
Feno, Barbara	Lynch, Linda	Schramm, Ian	
Feno, Mike	Marcus, Karen	Schutt, Marie	
Gahtan, Alan	Mazzarisi, Ernie	Schwager-Miles, Lynn	
Gale, Anne	McAuliffe, Steven	Shapiro, Betsy	